

THEORY - Learning to ride a bike can be understood by studying the work of American educational theorist David Kolb (Figure 1). In the concrete experience stage, the learner physically experiences the bike and the ride in the here-and-now. The aspiring cyclist then has the opportunity to consider what is working (or not) through reflective observation. The cyclist then thinks about ways to improve his or her next ride via abstract conceptualization. Every new attempt to ride is informed by a repeating pattern of experience, reflective observation, abstract thought, and active experimentation.



Figure 1 – David Kolb's Experiential Learning Model (ELM)

Experiential learning can exist with or without a teacher, coach, or facilitator. This type of learning relates to the “meaning making” process revealed during an individual's direct experience. According to Kolb, knowledge is continuously gained through both personal and environmental experiences. Kolb states that in order to gain genuine knowledge from an experience, certain abilities are required:

- The learner must be willing to be actively involved in the experience,
- The learner must be able to reflect on the experience,
- The learner must possess and use analytical skills to conceptualize the experience, and
- The learner must, through trial and error, use the new ideas gained from the experience.

PRACTICE - Some lessons can be learned vicariously. Most lessons are learned through direct, hands-on experience, and plenty of practice. Dr. Ralph Smedley, the founder of Toastmasters International, once said, “We learn best during moments of enjoyment.” This workshop is based upon blended learning and interactive exercises which some may consider “play.” The physical games and group activities demonstrated today are drawn from my several years of experience as a part-time challenge course facilitator working at George Mason University's Center for Team and Organizational Learning, a.k.a., “The EDGE.” It's time to get out of our comfort zone. It's time to explore what's at the edge of our learning zone but just shy of our panic zone. Are you ready to play? Let's go.

TOOLS	ACTIVITIES	SAFETY NOTES	YOUR NOTES
Sticks	“Together we are stronger”	Watch for splinters.	
	“Begin with the end in mind”	Caution against “sword fighting.”	
Hoops	“Helium Hoop”	Watch out for weak backs and knees.	
	“Pass the Hoop”	Be where the action is; prepared to spot others.	
Ropes	“Blind Polygon”	Use a square knot. 	
	“Yurt Circle”	Tie a double overhand bend on each rope. 	